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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (01/26): Palestinian press report  
on a new US plan to help relaunch negotiations

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Main Stories:

-----The three dailies lead with news that Special Envoy George Mitchell presented a US proposal to help relaunch peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians during his meetings with Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas. According to coverage, the US proposal calls for Israel to stop incursions into Area A, transfer some of Area B to Area A, allow the PA and its security forces to enter Area C, and to release Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. PA official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that a Palestinian official said that according to the US proposal, Israel will be asked to transfer tax revenues to the PA on a monthly basis and allow construction goods into Gaza. The source said that President Abbas is currently reviewing the proposal.

Independent daily Al-Quds reports that Mitchell suggested that Palestinian and Israeli senior officials work together in working groups to discuss the implementation of the US proposal, which will also involve marathon visits for Mitchell between Ramallah and Tel-Aviv. The headlines quote President Abbas stating that he will not return to peace talks with Israel unless the latter stops all settlement activities, noting that the US guarantees are not enough.

Al-Quds front pages news that since the Palestinian presidency and PLC terms ended yesterday, many Palestinian factions and national institutions stressed the need to end the Palestinian division and pursue national reconciliation in order to pave the way for holding presidential and legislative elections. In related news, independent daily Al-Ayyam reports that President Abbas signed a presidential decree calling for postponing the presidential and legislative elections until a national consensus is reached.

The dailies front page news on the weekly PA cabinet meeting held yesterday. According to coverage, the cabinet announced that January 27 will be a national day of solidarity with prisoners.

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Nabil Amer, writing in Al-Quds under the title "People Are Asking, What To Do?" suggests that it would be much easier for Senator Mitchell to succeed in his efforts to convince the Palestinians and Israelis to return to peace talks if he rented an apartment in Ramallah and Tel-Aviv. Amer is pessimistic about any breakthrough in peace talks, as he believes that the Palestinians are only clients of the Americans; they are not allies and not friends. He asks, "How long can the Palestinians count on US promises without achieving them?"

RUBINSTEIN